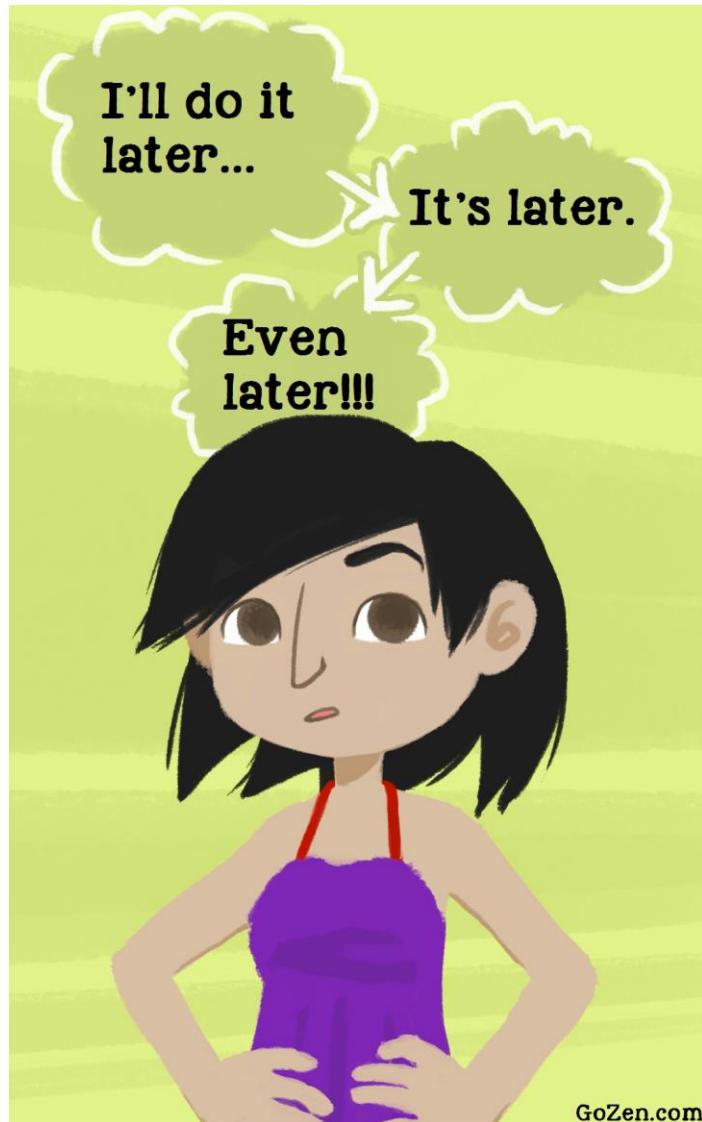


4 Steps to Help Your Child Defeat Procrastination (Illustrated)



“I’ll clean my room *tomorrow!*”

“It’s not *due* until next week!”

“I’ll do my chores *later!*”

They insist. They persuade. They don’t act.

Watching your kids go through the self-destructive process of procrastination can be extremely painful. Your options are to either do nothing, watching the whole, all-to-familiar scenario

unfold, help out, by doing some or all of the work *for* them, or play the “parent card” and *make* them do it, causing stress and bad feelings.

But none of these is a good option. Not one will improve your child’s life, increase their resilience, or empower them to take control.

[The research in brief](#)

We live in a society where, according to [research](#), 20% of adults self-identify as chronic procrastinators. Casual procrastination affects an even larger group.

If you evaluate the studies, or frankly just spend time with someone who chronically procrastinates, you will see the issue is not one defeated by simple logic. In other words, procrastination goes far beyond helping your child fix their schedule and prioritize better.

Chronically delaying tasks goes hand-in-hand with feelings of shame, guilt, and anxiety. So while your child may actually really *want* to accomplish their goals, mood and emotion play a role interfering with the execution. In short, negative emotions can derail self-control. As such, a key to reducing the procrastinating behavior has in large part to do with improving emotions.

[Try Mood Repair](#)

Among others, Dr. Pychyl (sounds like Mitchell), author of the 2013 book, *Solving the Procrastination Puzzle* has been exploring and promoting the use of mood repair, using psychological strategies to defeat procrastination where it starts. Simply put, you can learn to recognize that you are procrastinating, acknowledge its negative consequences, and employ one or more of a variety of simple techniques to pass it by and get back to being productive.

This thought-pattern overhaul works for adults, correcting an established problem. If we can teach these skills to our children when they are young, imagine the potential we can open up in them. Imagine how much unnecessary stress we can remove from their lives.

Here are four simple [research-based ideas](#) that you can teach your child, which will help them steer clear of procrastination from the outset, measurably improving their chances of avoiding it later in life.

1 – Teach Your Child Self-Compassion

“A moment of self-compassion can change your entire day. A string of such moments can change the course of your life.” ~Christopher K. Germer

Practice Self-compassion



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Let's say your child delays a task. While they may feel temporary pleasure from the procrastination, in the end, there are often lingering feelings of anxiety and then self-criticism from the job left undone. Here's the thing, beating oneself up for procrastinating only makes the situation worse as negative emotions inhibit self-control.

As an alternative, teach your child to forgive themselves, to be kind to themselves, and to treat themselves as they would treat their own best friend. Let them know this is a process of self-awareness. They realize they are procrastinating and it's time to make a change. Children will understand that the point of *not* procrastinating is simply to make their lives better.

2 – Encourage Your Child to ‘Time Travel’

“Visualize this thing that you want, see it, feel it, believe in it. Make your mental blue print, and begin to build.” ~Robert Collier



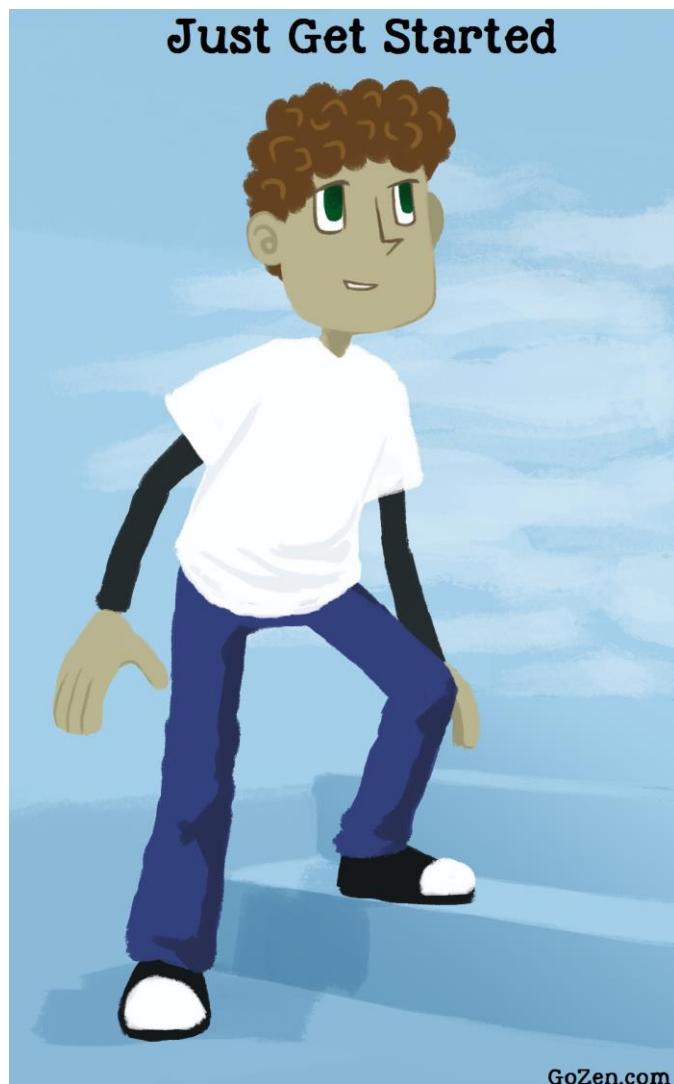
A fun way for kids to think about how procrastination affects them is to “time travel”. Have your child take a trip into the future and using visualization. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine how they will feel once the task is complete and how they will feel if it is not.

Sometimes this is all they need – the realization that “if I don’t clean my room now, that mountain of socks will be even larger when I have to clean it tomorrow and want to go out with my friends”.

By imagining how much better life will be for them tomorrow, they realize that what they have to deal with now is really not so bad.

3 – Show Your Child How to ‘Just Get Started’

“You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.” ~Martin Luther King, Jr.



A large part of the problem of procrastination comes from feeling overwhelmed about the entirety of the task. A science fair project takes hours of work – but the first 20 minutes only take 20 minutes to complete.

Just getting started means taking a baby step. If your child knows that they only need to do 20 minutes of work, they are much more likely to start. You can help your child set up mini-goals in their overall quest to complete a larger goal. Achieving each milestone can give your child a mood boost, making them more likely to continue, or return to the task positively in the future.

4 – Make Sure Your Child Starts with the Easy Things

“If you want to change the world, start off by making your bed. If you make your bed every morning, you will have accomplished the first task of the day. It will give you a small sense of pride, and it will encourage you to do another task, and another, and another. And by the end of the day that one task completed will have turned into many tasks completed.” ~ William H. McCraven, U.S. Navy Admiral



Starting a project or a task can often be the most stressful part. Perhaps it's a side-effect of the 'work before play' mentality, but we often feel the need to start with the hardest part. This creates unnecessary stress, inviting procrastination.

Release your child from the grasp of this thought. Help them find the parts that they like, and make sure they know that they can start there! This level of control is empowering, and it makes starting *anything* much more enjoyable.

Getting the ball rolling with an enjoyable part of a task often acts as a gateway to further, more complicated work.

Teach your kids simple research-based practices to relieve anxiety, procrastinate less, and live more resilient lives at www.gozen.com